

EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES

34 - TECHNOLOGY, SOCIAL AND NEW MEDIA & DIGITAL - Technology that is available we could utilize for mass texting.; An area of opportunity would be to have a bigger or broader stance on various Social media platforms. We recently switched from Facebook live streams to YouTube live streams in hopes of capturing a wider audience. Having an Instagram page would also be a great addition, being able to capture those who do not have Facebook but would like to be connected or informed of the various activities going on in the church. This may also reach a younger audience who tend to use Instagram or Threads.; Expanded presence on social media platforms to share parish life and Orthodox teachings; Accessible digital tools (e.g., Canva, video platforms) that make content creation and outreach easier than ever; Cultivate positive use of technology (e.g., streaming services, podcasts, zoom mtgs, text blasting announcements or reminders, online contributions, etc.); Technology – new and improved technologies that promote better communication to the community (texting, social media, AI); Local markets and street fairs for better engagement; Technology; AI can relieve some of the starting; Tech and digitization or content that is shareable; AI – chatbots for scheduling and answering other simple question; Resources that are available in the internet, including translated content about the church and Orthodoxy; Social Media marketing is dominating almost every other form in every genre; Serving Community/Area needs and sharing our faith (and our Light) with others; Social Media; Social Media – create a position for a young parishioner to manage / update social media – make it fun posts not all liturgical in nature; Contact through “new” communication media – text, twitter and other such platforms – this is different than promotion through social media; Interest in Orthodoxy: Technology Expansion: Tools like QR codes, text messaging, apps, and Instagram could broaden reach to younger demographics.; Iconography Evangelism: Church tours and icon explanation resources could connect cultural curiosity to Orthodox witness.; Digital Livestream Growth: YouTube and online presence can reach seekers, shut-ins, and former parishioners.; Leverage technology to enhance our visibility; Technology; Any type of technological advances, AI etc. that we can take advantage of to engage with potential parish members; Increased use of social media/communication; Social media/technology overall but in specific it makes St Sophia more accessible to more groups.; Digital Expansion for both internal and external communications and other operational efficiencies; Responsible utilization of technology and social media toward church goals; Potential for an educational speaker series or podcast featuring Father Symeon for our church social media accounts??; Social media for promoting our Christian orthodox faith and messaging.; Growing online interest in the Orthodox Church; Embracing media and making an effort to invite and meet people outside our community. Create bible studies (Orthodoxy bible studies), podcasts, and social media outlets and help education and reach people who wouldn't normally walk in the door. Host lectures, concerts and open houses that invite the wider community to learn about Orthodoxy.; Broadcast services, educational and outreach programs on multiple online channels, e.g., Youtube, Facebook, etc.; Participation in local town festivals may be desirable, e.g., setting a Saint Sophia Church booth.; New/better streaming platforms and technology can provide an opportunity for more broad engagement.

31 - LOCATION & COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES - Sister parishes are struggling with their physical locations, making St. Sophia a viable option; Nice geographic area; Great geographic area; Local geographic diversity that can be drawn; Location/suburban Philadelphia; Good location as in few Greek orthodox churches in area.; Location of church; I think population of western suburbs of Philly is growing, so potential for additional parishioners/stewards.; Monitoring areas of new home building, apartments or communities being added within the region, as new potential members may be moving into the area. For example, there is an explosion of new condos, homes and communities being built in the Exton/Downingtown/Frazer area that is within a 20-30min driving radius of St. Sophia. Maybe there is a way to advertise our events.; - Local population is very diverse; Lots of businesses in area; Population rates continue to rise in Montgomery County.; Growing population in area; Continued population growth in the region; Philadelphia suburbs are a hot bed for education, health care, and pharmaceutical industries attracting young people to the area; People moving out of the city and into suburbs; People who see the church internally who can come in for a visit and see; Expand outreach to neighboring business community let them know our mission and see how they can help.; Partnerships with nearby Orthodox parishes (Phoenixville, Upper Darby, Elkins Park) could expand shared ministries; ~ Inter-Parish Collaboration: Economic strength of the region; Needs in the community that can be served by parish; Collaboration with other denominations on ministries and service projects; Continue to participate in local food drives/blood drives; Find out what other churches are doing for helping outside the community.; Finding more charitable services in our area to which to contribute.; Proximity to local colleges and universities as this age group is actively exploring the topic of faith; Proximity to many colleges and universities to engage younger people; Greek Orthodox families

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that may have been raised in one of our Sister Parishes may have moved close to St. Sophia as adults. Need to develop a way to identify and embrace these young parishioners and families into our church.; There is an abundance of colleges and university schools in the Philadelphia area, perhaps having targeted outreach programs with those schools would be a great place to start. Also, we can create partnerships with architecture schools studying art history for touring our beautiful egg tempera frescoes, we should celebrate and promote this, it may inspire someone to be interested in orthodoxy or gain funding for our church.; We are the only Greek Orthodox Church in the area: if people in this area want to visit or attend a Greek Orthodox Church, we are the closest one.; Participate in township events (offer food; Marketing Opportunities (Tons of businesses and housing behind the church).; College & University Presence – Connect with Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) or campus ministries.; Increased exposure to our commitment to the community (we're not just the pretty church with great festivals; New types of community outreach beyond the festivals; Interfaith Partnerships: Collaborations like joint blood drives demonstrate community engagement and could expand further.

18 - GREATER NUMMERS OF SEEKERS & INTEREST IN ORTHODOXY-

Due to future uncertainty, there has been a growing trend in society of seeking some type of “spiritual connection” beyond material wealth or personal relationships. Most notably, young adults are now seeking “the meaning of life” and are exploring various religions. This usually starts online or via social settings.; Increased attraction in Orthodoxy of Protestants and people of faith; Lots of seekers who are disenfranchised with their faith looking for Orthodoxy; Drawing even more people looking to Orthodoxy as their avenue/connection to their faith [particularly young people]; Young Christians today seem to be seeking a community of faith that does good works; Non-Orthodox seekers in the region are exploring Orthodoxy, creating opportunities for catechism and evangelism.; A growing population of young adults and seekers in the area creates opportunities for parish engagement and growth.; Increased interest in Orthodoxy; Increased interest in Orthodoxy; Of those interested in organized religion it does seem that there is an increased interest in Orthodoxy; Growing interest in Orthodoxy, including increased numbers of converts and seekers; Engagement with Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF) groups on college campuses to reach young adults; More young adults are becoming disillusioned by Western Protestantism and finding their way to Orthodoxy instead.; People are disenchanted with their faith and seeking the true faith!; Many Catholics are not fulfilled by the faith and Orthodoxy is an “easy” transition!; More orthodox (Greek & other ethnicities) are marrying people who are not orthodox by birth. St. Sophia is a very welcoming parish, which should appeal to people in this demographic; Many people looking to change religions/interfaith marriages; If you believe what you read, there is a spiritual awakening in this country – how do we capitalize on that to bring back lapsed Orthodox and introduce the faith to others? The recent assassination of Charlie Kirk has shown at least it me that many people especially the young are looking for God in their lives.; Targeted Outreach (perhaps starting with Catholics).

6 - YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTES OUTREACH - Colleges and universities in the area; Rise of Orthodoxy in the West; Continued outreach to recent college graduates through “fun” activities; Outreach through college campuses; Young Professional Influx: Underrepresented 30–40 Demographic: This gap in attendance can be addressed with targeted ministries or outreach strategies.; Get involved with local OCF chapters; Getting involved with OCF groups at local colleges.

3 - GOVERNMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES - Government grants for specific programs such as security, feeding the poor.; Government regulations and laws; The tax code can be utilized effectively to encourage legacy giving.

2 - GREEK CULTURE - Richness of the Greek culture; People interest on Greek language and culture; Financial Diversification – grow revenue with planned giving, Greek cultural workshops/social events or other innovative ideas.

INTERNAL TO OUR PARISH AND NOT TO BE CONSIDERED AS EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITY

- ~ Local farmers' markets & street fairs → sell baked goods, hand out invitations to liturgy/festivals;
- ~ Opportunities that might would cause threats would be during Focus hours where people have been seen to gather in the church parking lot without permission who are not participating in the Focus program.
- ~ Continuing to expand our parish to be an example of service and worship in our region;
- ~ Metropolitan Growth Expectation: The Metropolitan encourages growth in parish size, framing this as an opportunity for vision and momentum.;
- ~ Young Adult League (YAL) Formation: A structured YAL could engage post-GOYA adults and prevent long-term disengagement.
- ~ Mentor young parishioners to create future leadership team members;
- ~ Hire a coordinator to govern missions that we want to do.
- ~ Adult Greek School;

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- ~ Men's ministry
- ~ Young Family Retention: With the right infrastructure, young families can be retained, strengthening long-term parish stability.; Expanded Adult Education:
- ~ Programs like Orthodoxy 101, scripture study, and lives of the saints could attract both seekers and cradle Orthodox.;
- ~ New Ministries: Men's fellowship, Bible studies, and parent groups would diversify offerings and appeal to underserved demographics.;
- ~ Arrival of Psalti: A trained psalti will enrich services, allowing more feast-day liturgies and weekday services.; Lay Apprenticeships:
- ~ Creating mentorship programs could harness parishioner energy while preventing long-term volunteer burnout.;
- ~ Soccer culture is a gaining in popularity within the US, and perhaps we could tap into this with the large fields we already have that is perfect for offering Greek youth and adult soccer groups.;
- ~ Financial commitment to a new PAID psalti who will be new music director. Will reintroduce traditional Greek Byzantine music to the chanter stand, choir and congregation.;
- ~ Facility Rentals: Expanded use of the parish hall for rentals and cultural events could bring new people onto the campus.;
- ~ Outreach to different spheres of influence starting with converts, non-orthodox spouses, infrequent Orthodox, and outsiders.;
- ~ People enjoy coming to our festival + other events giving us more visibility + an opportunity for others to visit our church proper + cultural hall. Helping attract active young adults + other families to grow our parish.;